



## Design Statement

### Housing Development at Balloonagh Tralee Co Kerry

Area of site 10,400m<sup>2</sup>

24 houses-12no 3 bed, 12no 2 bed and 4 single bed apartments

total residential area of 2411m<sup>2</sup>

Open space provided 2471m<sup>2</sup> which is greater than the 15% required

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We have now prepared a design statement clearly outlining the analytical approach adopted during the conceptual stages of this project. This process stemmed from a detailed brief developed through meetings with the client/the applicant. From establishment of a clear concise brief we, the designers, were then able to carry out a S.C.O.T analysis of the proposed site and devise a scheme that we believe embraces the characteristics of the existing built environment whilst implementing the principles of the Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide, the document which forms the cornerstone of our residential design layouts. In arriving at the Site Layout Arrangement currently being proposed it was essential for us to not only respond to the brief but to adhere to the ideologies set out in the aforementioned document, which involves an assessment under 12 established criteria, as follows:

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#### 1. Context.

The housing/apartment layout has been carefully designed to complement its surrounding environment, its neighbouring developments and the existing natural features of the site. The site accessed across an existing green area off James Connolly Park, and the site is surrounded on two sides by existing housing estates and on the other sides by school grounds and playing fields. We have arranged the new development to take account of the context. There is an existing pedestrian link going through the site to the school to the site. We have provided a drop off area at the entrance to the site and continued the pedestrian link through the development. The houses along this link are double fronted so that there is passive

supervision. The new houses are designed in a layout to enclose a new public amenity area, and create a sense of space. The layout arranges the new houses to back on to the existing back garden walls as much as possible.

## **2. Connections**

The proposed housing design has pedestrian linkages which promote the sustainable practices of walking and cycling with priorities given to these links for convenience of connectivity from the adjoining housing and its established amenities. The proximity of the development to the playing fields to the west and the pedestrian routes being proposed to the school, will lend themselves to a reduction in vehicle usage and resulting emissions.

The open space throughout the development predominantly overlooked by the proposed dwellings. This provides passive surveillance and ensures a safer, more secure environment. The proposed site is within walking distance of the Tralee centre and thus naturally feels like a natural extension of the existing settlement giving that necessary connection to the community.

## **3. Inclusivity.**

The configuration of the new housing, the location of the access points and the location of the dwellings and the associated open space will result in a development inclusive in nature. The open space which will be included to benefit the local residents together with walkways and play areas along existing pedestrian route will serve to promote inclusivity. The open space in the development is centrally located which will accommodate safe and secure play areas and the designed movement routes, both vehicular and pedestrian, further compliment this ethos.

All dwellings fully conform with the recommendations of TGD Part M which will ensure that homes can cater for those with movement difficulties. Furthermore, the layout of the site was heavily governed by the natural lie of the land. This determined the optimum arrangement of roads and dwellings to minimise excessive level changes or engineering to reduce same. The over-riding factor being the ease of movement throughout the site for all, regardless of mobility.

## **4. Variety**

We have endeavoured to provide a broad housing mix within the development whilst paying respect to market demand. (12no 3 bed, 12no 2 bed and 4 single bed apartments) This variety in housing sizes provides a depth of choice appealing to a wider spectrum. This should result in a residential development with a cross section of residents contributing to a more diverse community. It was important for us to achieve a successful balance of house types and designs arranged in a complimentary fashion. Another goal in the design process was the creation of housing types which would provide a range for a varied tenure but in an indistinguishable way. All dwellings would have a unified theme and would be designed and constructed to a similar high standard despite the size or proposed tenure. The housing mix would also help to encourage a social mix and promote saleability. The entire development is residential with little need to consider mixed use due to the scale of the housing scheme and the proximity to the established town centre of Tralee.

## **5. Efficiency**

With the positive advances in the building regulation requirements, particularly with Technical Guidance Documents Part L and Part F, the housing standards are improving constantly. That being said, it is still of paramount importance for us to continually exceed the regulations and continue to design and build to allow for future improvements. Sustainability, energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions remain at the core of our design process. The dwellings being proposed will be constructed to best practice and beyond with minimal environmental impact and exceptional energy efficient construction methods. Air tight construction, reduced thermal bridging,, high levels of insulation and the implementation of renewable technologies will be utilised in achieving high performance sustainable housing (NZEB rating).

In designing the housing layout, we focused on the natural assets of the site. The area of the site was fully used with maximum densities proposed for efficient employment of land. All dwellings will have sufficient area to allow for refuse, composting and recycling storage within the associated plot. The solar orientation was instrumental in deciding the eventual layout. House nos 13 to 28 all have south facing rear elevations, while 05 to 12 are south facing, and 1 to 4 are facing west /east but which will also benefit from the southerly aspect. The intention is to provide a housing development with minimal impact on the environment with dwellings requiring low levels of energy for daily operation.

Sustainable methods of drainage have been designed for the site with attenuation proposed by the consulting engineers in the landscaped areas. The large areas of open space will be landscaped to promote biodiversity within the site while the sites location will ideally promote more sustainable modes of transport and help reduce vehicle related emissions.

## **6. Distinctiveness**

The design process was guided by a need to meet the client's brief, achieve a sustainable density but also create a distinct sense of place and provide a positive addition to the locality. The surrounding environs have an established character so the housing development was designed to nestle into its context and compliment rather than compete with its environment. The materials would tie the aesthetic while the housing design would provide individuality.

The courtyard aspect of the design and the landscaping will provide a strong identity for the development and give it a distinctive sense of place.

## **7. Layout**

The nature of the site and the adjoining features influenced the eventual housing layout. In order to provide a development that would respond to its context, avail of the solar orientation, pay respect to the necessity for passive supervision and the decision to incorporate 'active-frontages', we arrived at an estate arrangement with all houses and apartments which overlooked the open space which effectively skirted the perimeter. The houses overlook the open space and passively surveil all access ways. A double fronted house 28 is provided on short cul-de-sac road on the east side to over-look an amenity play area.(this was necessary because of an existing sewer that cannot be diverted). The pedestrian route to the school is also overlooked by double fronted houses no 20 & 21.

By ensuring that all open space areas are overlooked by houses the potential for anti-social behavior will be greatly reduced. As previously stated, several pedestrian linkages are proposed which should discourage traffic movements.

### **8. Public Realm**

The afore-mentioned open spaces are intended to provide enjoyable amenity space for the residents but will also help define the development. The majority of the housing overlooks open space which is a desirable feature for dwellings. The boundary wall will correspondingly reduce in height to allow the intended integration and a relationship with same. The open space will be suitably bounded on the roadside to enhance safety but allow connectivity. Further to the public open space provision, all dwellings are provided with private space to the rear which will be suitably screened to ensure privacy, prevent overlooking and define the spaces.

### **9. Adaptability**

The housing will exceed the regulations with regard to energy performance (to achieve NZEB rating) and to further future proof it would be intended that the dwellings will fulfill changing functionality throughout its life cycle. The housing is designed to be generous in space with intelligent arrangements including stairwells to facilitate change and adaptation. Gardens are predominantly large to again cater for rear extensions should the occupant's needs outgrow the current housing.

### **10. Privacy and Amenity**

The layout, whilst open in aspect has been designed to strike a careful balance to maintain adequate privacy where necessary. Gardens will be screened and the houses will have private open space with separation distances ensuring the prevention of overlooking.

Internally the dwellings are so designed to buffer with the use of hallways on adjoining houses. Party walls will be detailed and constructed to meet the requirements of TGD Part E and minimize the transmission of sound from unit to unit.

### **11. Parking.**

The goal with the provision of parking was to ensure all dwellings had adequate parking for 2no. cars but to provide same in a location that was convenient for the residents to their respective front doors. Security is guaranteed as the parking is close to the houses and the appearance of the development remains uncluttered without overwhelming the kerb appeal with excessive parking throughout.

Houses 5 to 12 have the parking located on the far side of a green space, but all other houses have parking within the plot. (the parking for the apartments is also on the far side of a green area but overlooked) Four accessible parking spaces have been provided. Variations of the parking arrangements, have been allowed for to reduce the regimented appearance and small outdoor spaces included to the front of the dwellings which could accommodate small grassed/planted area thus reducing the dominance of hardscaping. It would also be proposed to provide tree planting to soften the impact further to the streetscape. The provision of parking within the individual housing plot will satisfy consumer demand but also eliminate issues relating to contention over availability and the maintenance/taking in charge of same.

## 12. Detailed Design

The eventual layout has been produced hand in hand with the landscaping and the material selection all to make a positive contribution to this established locality. The overall scheme will create a useable and appealing public realm with the landscaped areas providing enjoyable, functional and a visually appealing environment. The ideology of the layout was to root it in its context, create a sense of place all while making a positive contribution to the existing built environment.



Apartments